

INTRODUCTION

In Louisiana, food and cooking are deeply rooted in the culture and play a large role in bringing the community together. However, the state faces significant health challenges and is known for having one of the most medically vulnerable populations in the country. To address knowledge gaps about nutrition and encourage healthier eating habits, the Culinary Medicine Outreach Program aims to combine the accessibility of the Crescent City Farmers Market (CCFM) clinic and the passion of the Culinary Medicine Society (CMS) members with the expertise of dietitians at the Goldring Center of Culinary Medicine. This initiative aims to advocate for and introduce the benefits of culinary medicine to community members in New Orleans.

Initially started outside local grocery stores, this initiative has since transitioned to targeting community members at the Crescent City Farmers Market. Research shows that nutrition education at farmers markets increases fruit and vegetable intake and has a positive impact on attitudes and behaviors surrounding eating and preparing fresh, healthier foods.¹ By reintroducing the successful tabling initiative, we provided community members with food recommendations tailored to various health conditions to promote excitement and interest in nutritional education. We also aimed to address common barriers to eating more fruits and vegetables, such as lack of knowledge on how to prepare foods and accessibility,^{2,3} by distributing healthy yet practical recipes utilizing seasonal fruits and vegetables available at the farmers market.

AIM

To enhance and improve overall community health and wellness through the integration of the Culinary Medicine Society at the Crescent City Farmers Market Student-Run Clinic, which will provide community members with practical knowledge and resources that will help them make healthier and more nutritious food choices to improve their overall health.

PROTOCOL

- Establish a connection with a local farmers market or student-run clinic and form an agreement that allows CMS members to set up their own booth or join existing efforts.
- Develop dietary recommendation handouts tailored to common comorbidities in the population you serve, along with rotating recipes featuring seasonal ingredients available at local farmers markets, in collaboration with local dietitians.
- Ensure all volunteering members attend a training session led by a registered dietitian or certified teaching kitchen member to gain the necessary knowledge for sharing health recommendations related to patients' diets and eating habits.
- Assign one to two CMS Executive Board members or medical student volunteers to join the clinic for two to three hours each month, providing community members with nutritional education tailored to their comorbidities, along with seasonal recipes.
- Distribute accurate, dietitian-approved informational handouts and pamphlets that include seasonal recipes and dietary recommendations for managing conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia. Optional: hand out information on how to participate in local community cooking classes.

BENEFITS

- Improved Patient Outcomes: Culinary medicine offers practical dietary advice that can help manage and prevent the onset and worsening of chronic diseases that are prevalent in the New Orleans area.
- Empowerment through Education: By giving patients the knowledge and skills on how to read nutrition labels and choose healthier options, we are providing patients with the tools they need to make healthier food choices tailored to their comorbidities and encouraging them to recognize the impact their dietary choices have on their overall health and quality of life.
- Community Engagement: Providing nutrition handouts and recipes creates an interactive and engaging environment that shows patients that with the right ingredients, eating healthy can still involve eating delicious, easy-to-prepare foods.
- Accessibility: Offering resources, nutritional education, recipes, and advice during clinic visits ensures that patients receive relevant information about their comorbidities at a convenient time and location.
- Holistic Care: Integrating culinary medicine into the clinic's current services supports a holistic approach to patient care, addressing medical and lifestyle factors and teaching the patient how to adjust both to improve their health outcomes.

RESULTS

Category	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025
Hours at market	1	2.5	0	2.5	5
Hypertension	0	4	0	2	7
Type 2 Diabetes	0	1	0	1	2
High Cholesterol	0	1	0	0	0
Mediterranean Community Cooking Classes Cards	1	0	0	0	1
Seasonal Recipes	12	10	0	0	46
Notes	<u>Weather Issues:</u> cut short due to rain <u>Specific Recipes:</u> zucchini muffins (4), pecan cabbage citrus slaw (4), carrot cake smoothie (4)				<u>Specific Recipes:</u> zucchini muffins (3), pecan cabbage citrus slaw (4), carrot cake smoothie (3) <u>Weather Issues:</u> rainy/suboptim al temps <u>Weather Issues:</u> cancelled due to snow <u>Specific Recipes:</u> zucchini muffins (8), pecan cabbage citrus slaw (4), carrot cake smoothie (5), veggie frittata (7), African peanut soup (7), black bean brownies (6), creole roasted chickpeas (6)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Since this project officially started in Fall 2023, we have a lot of areas for growth and development including:

- Training the incoming leadership boards to ensure the continuation of this project in the upcoming class
- Diversifying our pamphlets to include a broader range of health condition recommendations and seasonal recipes
- Expanding our tabling initiative to additional farmers markets and grocery stores throughout the greater New Orleans area
- Distributing samples of our seasonal recipes to demonstrate how simple and flavorful healthy eating can be
- Addressing weather-related challenges to encourage participation regardless of climate conditions

CONCLUSIONS

Integrating culinary medicine into the CCFM clinic will significantly benefit our patients and the local community. By providing practical, accessible nutritional advice and resources, we aim to foster a healthier community and improve patient outcomes by targeting the current gaps in knowledge about making healthier dietary choices. We look forward to the support and collaboration of all involved in bringing this initiative to life.

CITATIONS or ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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